

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Advent - a new beginning

December is here, and most of the world is getting ready to celebrate Christmas — with songs like “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire,” “It’s Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas” and “White Christmas.” Much of the celebration focuses on giving and receiving presents.

Amid the world’s observance of a secular Christmas, even Christians sometimes lose sight of the season’s proper focus. Advent, especially, can get lost in the rush to Christmas.

Advent is the beginning of a new church year. It is a penitential season — a time to prepare for the Savior’s birth. During Advent, some people set up a wreath with four candles on the outside, and a fifth candle in the middle. Each week a candle is lit.

Week One (Blue Candle): “The Prophecy Candle” symbolizes hope, remembering the prophets who foretold the birth of Christ.

Week Two (Blue Candle): “The Bethlehem Candle” symbolizes love, in remembrance of the birthplace of God’s Son.

Week Three (Pink Candle): “The Shepherd’s Candle” symbolizes joy, because the shepherds were the first to hear the announcement of Jesus’ birth and the joy that His birth means for mankind.

Week Four (Blue Candle): “The Angels’ Candle” symbolizes peace, a reminder that very soon you, too, will be joining the angels in singing and praising God for His faithfulness and grace in sending His Son.

Christmas Eve and the rest of the Christmas season (White Candle, in center): “The Christ Candle” symbolizes that Christ, who is the Light of the World, has entered the darkness of this sin-filled world. This Child was born to save the world from sin, death and the power of the devil.

While you focus on remembering the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, you should also remember that He still comes to you daily through His Word and Sacraments. He will come again — His Second Coming, on the Last Day — in His Glory, when He will judge both the living and the dead.

Saints in Christ, Advent is similar to the season of Lent, when you prepare for a jubilant holiday. So as you observe this penitential season, focus on why the Baby Jesus was born. Focus on the cross of Christ and what He has done for you. His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave remind you of how you are saved. Have a blessed Advent!

Rev. Donald Klatt • Lakeland Region Pastoral Counselor

‘Follow My Lead’

Zion Evening Guild of Zion Alexandria, hosted a Lakeland I “Follow My Lead” event on Oct. 5. Rev. Dennis Angland, Alexandria Zone pastoral counselor (pictured), concluded the event with closing remarks and prayers, encouraging the attendees to follow God’s lead.



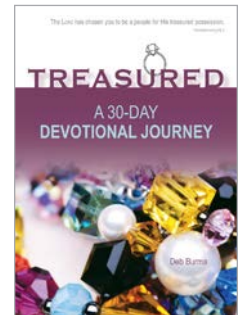
Ebenezer women help WIC

The ladies of Ebenezer, Leaf Valley, made 12 fleece blankets for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), a supplemental nutrition program that helps low-income women and children in need. We pray the blankets warm their hearts and bodies this winter!



A day of joy

“Treasured” was the theme of the fall LWML retreat for Our Redeemer Women in Mission, Moorhead. Based on Duet. 14:2, the women walked away knowing they are a precious, treasured possession of our heavenly Father, who sought and claimed us as His own in Christ! From coal to diamonds, we are continuously being transformed in Christ, reflecting His glory and light to a dark world. It was a great day with Bible study, singing and prayer; a day removed from life’s events to focus on God’s Word, spent joyfully with fellow sisters in Christ.



Special visit

When word spread that newly-elected LWML President Debbie Larson (pictured, smiling at camera) was in Bemidji with her husband, Scott, to visit his parents, De and Lloyd Larson, she was invited to attend the annual picnic of the Trinity, Bemidji, Evening Guild. Debbie shared words of encouragement, emphasizing support of mission grants. May God richly bless President Debbie as she serves the LWML.

